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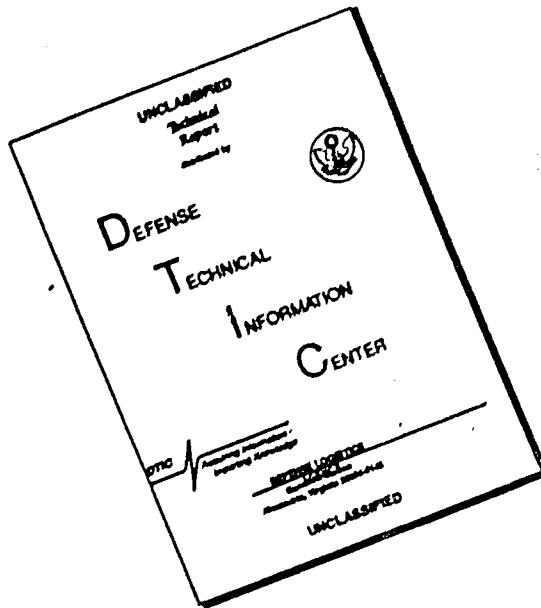
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Lessons Learned

HEADQUARTERS,
52D AVIATION BATTALION
APO San Francisco, 96318

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AVK-C

1112 October 65

SUBJECT: (9) Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 September 65. (11)
Report Control Symbol (10-28(R))

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TO: Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations
Department of the Army
Washington 25, D.C.

(18) OACSFOR

(19) OT-RD-650131

SECTION 1: Significant Organization or Unit Activities.

1. (U) This report covers the period 1 July 1965 through 30 September 1965 and is submitted in compliance with AR 525-24 dated 29 October 1959. Activities of subordinate units are included in this report.

2. (C) Type and number of aircraft authorized:

- a. UH-1B 32
- b. UH-1B(Armed) 31
- c. UH-1D 32
- d. O1F 55
- e. U6A 2

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3. (C) a. Number of aircraft hours flown during preceding quarter:

229195

b. Number of sorties flown during preceding quarter: 38,434.

(1) Tactical and logistical sorties in support of Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and US Forces: 36,709.

(2) Training and maintenance sorties: 1,725

4. (U) Number of days engaged in operations and training during preceding quarter: 92

5. (U) Training Subjects Stressed:

- (1) Armed helicopter: escort and suppressive fire tactics and techniques.
- (2) Aviator standardization training.
- (3) Effects of weather and density altitude on flight conditions.
- (4) Aircraft performance characteristics.

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- (5) Airmobile operations training.
- (6) Visual reconnaissance.
- (7) Aerial observer training.
- (8) Flight safety training.

b. Ground Training.

- (1) Crew served and individual weapons training.
- (2) Helicopter door gunner training.
- (3) Status of Forces Agreement.
- (4) Code of Conduct.
- (5) Medical Training.
- (6) Evasion and Escape Training.
- (7) CBR Training.
- (8) Defense Plans and Alerts.

6. (C) Brief summary of Major Tactical Operations:

a. 16 July 1965: Elements of the 117th Aviation Company, the 114th Aviation Company, Company A, 501st Aviation Battalion, Company A, 82d Aviation Battalion and the 145th Aviation Platoon (twenty six UH1Ds, twenty four UH1Bs and twenty eight UH1Es(Armed)) performed an air landed assault mission in support of 2d Battalion, 1st ARVN Airborne Brigade, and in support of Highway #19 road clearing operation, DAN TIEN 109. The mission was staged from An Khe Airfield to landing zone at coord BR 388 352. A total of 1025 troops were lifted in three lifts. The USAF provided twelve B-57s for prestrike and six A-1Es for close air support and air cover. No fire was received and there were no incidents.

b. 24 July 1965: Elements of Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion, the 119th Aviation Company and the 52d Aviation Platoon (ten UH1Ds, nine UH1Bs, and ten UH1Es(Armed)) performed a combat support extraction in support of the 1st ARVN Airborne Ranger Battalion. Aircraft staged from Holloway Army Airfield to landing zone at coord BR 133 539, extracted 96 troops in (1) lift, and returned to Holloway Army Airfield without incident. USAF close air support was not required.

c. 3 August 1965: Elements of Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion, the 117th Aviation Company, the 119th Aviation Company, and the 52d Aviation Platoon (eighteen UH1Ds, eighteen UH1Bs and seventeen UH1Bs(Armed)) performed an air landed assault mission, DAN THI NG 5, in support of the 3rd and 8th Battalions, 1st ARVN Airborne Brigade. The aircraft staged from Holloway Army Airfield and lifted 1150 troops in six lifts to the landing zone at Duc Co Airfield. Close air support was provided by six USAF B-57s, three of which were used for prestrike and the other three provided air cover. Small arms and automatic fire was received in the vicinity of the landing zone resulting in one UH1B(A) of A/1st and one UH1D of the 117th Avn Co hit. The aircraft returned to Holloway Army Airfield with no casualties.

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d. 10 August 1965: Elements of the 117th Aviation Company, Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion, the 119th Aviation Company, and the 52d Aviation Platoon (sixteen UH1Ds, sixteen UH1Bs, and fifteen UH1Bs(Armed)) performed an air landed assault mission in support of the 5th ARVN Airborne Battalion. Aircraft staged from Holloway Army Airfield and lifted 450 troops in three lifts to the landing zone at Duc Co Airfield. During the last lift, two ARVN WIA were extracted and 4000 lbs of supplies were carried to the RVN Marine TF at coord YA 917269. Seven UH1Bs and five UH1Bs(A) of the 119th Avn Co were not utilized on the 3rd lift, but were diverted to coord YA 917269 to extract 45 ARVN KIAs to Pleiku. After the last lift, three UH1Ds and two UH1Bs(A) of the 117th Avn Co were further diverted to extract fifteen ARVN WIAs from coord YA 947270 to Pleiku. Close air support was provided by eight USAF F-100s, four of which were utilized in the prestrike while the remaining four were used to provide air cover. Small arms, automatic weapons and mortar fire were received in the landing zone and in the vicinity of the loading zone during the first lift. Two UH1Bs(A) received hits and one US door gunner was WIA.

e. 23 August 1965: Ten UH1Ds and six UH1Bs(A) of Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion performed an air landed assault in support of the 23rd ARVN Division's Highway #21 clearing operation. Aircraft departed Ban Me Thout to stagefield at Nha Trang Airfield, refueled, carried one lift of troops into a landing zone at coordinate: BQ 685137, and then returned to Ban Me Thout. The A/1st aircraft carried 80 troops of the VNSF Project Delta. Close air support was provided by four USAF A1Es used for prestrike of the landing zone. No hostile fire was received and there were no incidents.

f. 24 August 1965: Elements of Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion, the 121st Aviation Company and Company A, 501st Aviation Battalion (thirty three UH1Ds and eighteen UH1Bs(Armed)) performed an air landed assault in support of the Highway #21 road clearing operation. Aircraft staged from Ban Me Thout (East) Airfield and carried 1257 troops of the Marine TF (RVN) in five lifts to a landing zone at coord BQ 120165. During the last lift into the landing zone one UH1B(A) of A/1st experienced a low side governor failure, lost RPM, and crashed into the trees in the vicinity of the landing zone. The crew was evacuated by one UH1D to Ban Me Thout. They sustained minor injuries; the aircraft damage was major. Close air support was provided by four USAF A1Es utilized for airstrike. No hostile fire was received.

g. 10 September 1965: Elements of Company A, 1st Aviation Battalion the 119th Aviation Company and Company A, 82d Aviation Battalion (twenty six UH1Ds, thirteen UH1Bs and eighteen UH1Bs(A)) performed an air landed assault and extraction mission in support of the 5th US Special Forces Group. 50 USSF and 210 VN Airborne Rangers were lifted from the stagefield at Quang Ngai to the landing zone at coord BT 137003 in one lift and later extracted in one lift from the same landing zone. Aircraft returned to Quang Ngai. No hostile fire was received and no incidents occurred. Close air support was provided by eight USAF A1Es utilized for prestrike and eight USAF B-57s used for air cover.

7. (C) Detailed description of especially significant operation or events.

a. Deployment of the 219th Aviation Company (Combat Surveillance)

(1) Memo 27, Headquarters USMACV II Corps Advisory Group, dtd 1 July 1965, established the concept under which the unit would support the II Corps Tactical Zone Surveillance Program. Memorandum 27 provided detailed planning information for deployment, administration, employment and command relationships.

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(a) Criteria used for determining the number of aircraft deployed were: size of sector, VC activity, amount of coastline and airfield capability. Platoon HQs were to be co-located at each Province and Special Zone Headquarters.

(b) Employment plans revolve around repetitious, systematic coverage of a specific area by the same pilot and observer until complete familiarity is gained with the area. Sectors were to be divided into areas suitable for coverage by one O1F aircraft sortie. Mission priority specified a minimum of 70% of all hours flown be devoted to visual reconnaissance, with four hours per aircraft being the desired daily average.

(c) Sector was established as the basic echelon at which visual reconnaissance and surveillance was to be planned and executed. Briefing - debriefing responsibility, along with dissemination of information was to be handled by the sector reconnaissance officers.

(d) Upon deployment, the deployed aircraft platoons/sections were to come under the operational control of the sector Senior Advisor, with the company retaining administration and logistic responsibility for all elements.

(2) By mid-July the unit's degree of operational readiness had progressed sufficiently to allow for deployment of thirty O1F's to the six platoon locations. Initial deployment was completed on 28 July 1965. Complete deployment to all twelve sectors with forty-eight aircraft was accomplished by mid Sept 1965.

(3) Summary of Operations: Visual reconnaissance and surveillance was planned and executed at sector level in accordance with the aircraft employment plan. The method of employment facilitated early detection and rapid reporting of enemy information within the sectors. In addition to aerial surveillance missions, unit aircraft supported all major ground operations executed within II Corps during this report period. The majority of the units tactical missions involved a composite crew - a US Army Aviator and an ARVN Observer. All unit aircraft will eventually be equipped with 2.75" marking rockets. The four O1Fs currently equipped, have materially assisted forward air controllers in locating targets with a minimum delay. The unit aircraft have performed nearly all kinds of missions possible, yet a predominant number were combat surveillance. Significant activities are as follows:

(a) Hours flown - A total of 3293 hours were flown during the month of September which was the first thirty day period the unit has had a full complement of 48 O1's. For the three (3) months period covered by this report, 75% of all hours flown were in support of combat operations and the surveillance program. A total of 7,473 hours and 6,736 sorties were flown during the quarter.

(b) Hits - Ten separate aircraft hits have been reported during the period covered. Hits were sustained at varying altitudes between 100 and 1500 feet above the terrain. Only two superficial flesh wound injuries resulted from hits. Aircraft damage from enemy ground fire has not been so extensive as to prevent aircraft returning to home base.

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(c) Weather - Weather continues to be a deterrent to maximum utilization. Dispersion of the unit aircraft over II Corps is such that major seasonal changes have an adverse effect on approximately 50% of aircraft utilization during a seasonal time frame. Twenty-four O1's are positioned in areas influenced by coastal weather while the other twenty-four are located inland and are presently influenced by the monsoon season.

b. 24 Aug - 28 Sept 1965, Operation Ramrod/Highland, detailed in Inclosure #1.

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SECTION III: COMMANDERS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. (U) Personnel and Morale Activities:

a. Personnel Shortages. During first quarter FY 66 this battalion remained fifteen officers understrength. Officer shortages were further accentuated by the necessity of maintaining ten Officers and three Warrant Officers in full time non TOE Spaces required to augment the staff and to perform necessary liaison with II Corps tactical units. Enlisted strength remained at approximately 95% authorized strength, however, critical shortages existed in certain MOS's. (See Inclosure 2). The critical personnel situation has for some time, caused a severe drain on the energies of the remaining personnel.

b. Recreation Facilities. Recreational facilities continue to be extremely limited. Camp Holloway has a small library, a handball court, a combined tennis and basketball court, a volleyball court, and a small theater building (150, person capacity) to serve a cantonment area of over 1000 troops. Approval has been received for improvement of recreational facilities, ie, a new and larger library, a photographic laboratory, a taping room and a game room, and construction of additional seats for the theater.

c. Mail. Mail delivery is unsatisfactory. Frequently mail is delayed 3 to 5 days in delivery to this installation from Saigon. Ten days from date of stateside postmark to date of delivery of air mail is not uncommon. This headquarters had approval to establish an APO at Camp Holloway, however, plans for construction of the building were changed and new plans were resubmitted on 10 July 1965. No answer has been received to date.

d. Post Exchange. Basic necessities are in extremely short supply and delivery of the small token shipments are infrequent and inadequate. This activity has instituted a rationing program, but even with this measure almost all of the supply of basic items is exhausted.

2. (C) Intelligence:

Combat Intelligence and Security of Operations. The primary cause of excessive loss and casualty rates in the conduct of airmobile operations is often times the result of a compromised operational plan. This compromise can either be the result of a determined effort by the Viet Cong intelligence gathering agencies, the infiltration of ARVN units by Viet Cong sympathizers, or carelessness on the part of planners in the use of communications means and physical security of classified documents. In order to reduce the chance of compromise of an operation to a tolerable level, several things should be accomplished. Operational planning must take place in a secure area with access to plans and planning areas limited to a strictly "need to know" basis. The time lapse between planning and execution should be sufficiently long to allow for detailed planning, but not so long as to increase the possibility of compromise beyond acceptable levels. With the increased VC capability for surreptitious monitoring, communications security should be rigidly enforced. In the planning and conduct of operations, the security of operational plans should at all times be of paramount importance.

Of equal importance with the security of operational planning is the validity and timeliness of the intelligence that is used to develop the plan. Combat intelligence and the timely reaction to this intelligence is often inadequate at best. Enemy capabilities should be more accurately determined with respect to location, size, armament and reinforcement. Reconnaissance of landing zones and operational areas should be thorough and continuous, commensurate with the requirement for reducing unusual activity in a prospective operational area to a minimum.

In areas of limited landing zones where the VC have the capability to establish an ambush at all or most LZs, it may become necessary to employ ground reconnaissance units to determine the suitability and enemy situation, and to physically secure the landing zone for the initial troop lift. During the execution phase of an operation, reconnaissance and intelligence gathering should be continuous in the operational and landing zone area. Upon receipt of additional intelligence, timely use should be made of it by having contingency plans developed for the commitment of reserves, the utilization of strike aircraft and supporting weapons, and the action of friendly troop units on the ground. An immediate and concentrated effort should be made to develop an effective intelligence gathering system. This system should take advantage of facilities and means available, to include aerial observation, airborne radar, infra red surveillance equipment and above all, vigorous patrol actions. Once gathered, rapid dissemination to interested units and commands must be made to fully exploit its value.

3.(C) Operations

a. Utilization of Armed Helicopters. Due to cessation of production of the UH1B helicopters, it is no longer possible to obtain new UH1Bs for use as armed helicopters and convert helicopters with 600 hours flying time to troop carriers as had been the previous practice. This, in turn, necessitated a review of how armed helicopters were being utilized to conserve the resources available. As a result of the review, several practices previously employed were changed. Such practices as providing continuous armed helicopter cover over vehicular convoys, making dawn and dusk patrols of the areas surrounding military compounds and providing continuous air cover over operational areas have been curtailed. Use of OLF aircraft for observation with armed helicopters on ground alert was established as a procedure to perform these missions and still provide adequate support. To date, this has proven very successful and resulted in substantial savings in flying hours on the armed helicopters.

b. USAF Prestrike Around Landing Zones (LZs). It has been determined that where any possibility of enemy contact exists on a heliborne assault, a prestrike of the area around the landing zone (LZ) is mandatory. During this period, an extremely effective technique has been developed to exploit the shock effect of the prestrike in conjunction with assault landing. The usual prestrike available consists of two to four USAF ALE aircraft loaded with fragmentation bombs, rockets, and 20mm cannon. By coordination with the USAF Forward Air Controller (FAC), the ground tactical commander, and the aviation unit commander, an LZ time is selected. Dependent on the tactical situation and the aircraft and ordnance available, the prestrike starts anywhere from 15 - 30 minutes prior to LZ time, and continues until the landing force arrives. At this point two to four ALE aircraft are pulled out of the prestrike and position themselves so that they can lead the helicopter formation into the landing zone with 20mm cannon fire on the approach path, sides of the LZ and departure path of the helicopters. As the ALEs pull up and are clear, the armed helicopters accompanying the troop carriers pick up the fire and continue until the troop aircraft depart the LZ, when the armed helicopters escort them to safe altitude. During the time the helicopters are in the LZ area, the ALEs strike likely enemy positions approximately 500 meters around the perimeter of the LZ. This technique provides continuous fire around the landing zone from the time the prestrike commences until the first lift is on the ground and the troop carriers have reached a safe altitude. The troops on the ground then secure the LZ for successive lifts. While this technique does not guarantee neutralization of a well dug-in enemy, it does maximize the shock effect of the prestrike and reduces enemy reaction time against the heliborne forces to an absolute minimum. In addition to the above, when artillery fire is available, it precedes the prestrike and then shifts to deny escape routes from the enemy.

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c. Helicopter Formations in Assault Operations. A continuing study and appraisal of helicopter formations in assault operations is conducted by this battalion. Several are used, with selection of the formation based on mission (combat assault, troop placement, extraction), LZ size, LZ orientation, intelligence on enemy dispositions, terrain, winds and armed helicopter escort capabilities. Formations used are: Vs of 3 in trail, Vs of 5 in trail, staggered echelon of 3s (left or right) and staggered trail. Where the LZ permits, Vs of 3 in trail permits good control and ease of coverage by the armed helicopters. When the size of the LZ is too small to accept an entire company, the elements (3 or 6 ships) are separated by 20 seconds. Normally 1 or 2 minute intervals are placed between companies to permit the armed helicopters of each succeeding company to pick up the cover from the preceding company. Vs of 5 are used in large LZs where large numbers of troops can be landed quickly. Staggered echelons are used where, due to wind or terrain, the orientation of the LZ is wide, but shallow in length. This permits echelons of 3 to land next to each other. Elements and companies are separated by the same intervals previously described. The staggered trail is used in long narrow LZs such as a road, or in small LZs which will only take 1 or 2 helicopters at a time, or during an extraction where this formation provides an easy loading configuration for the ground unit. Careful briefing, planning and continued practice contributes to ease of control and reduction of confusion.

d. Door Gunner Tour of Duty. It has been proved in Vietnam that a crew of four is essential for safe and effective operation of UH1B, UH1B(Armed) and UH1D helicopters. This crew consists of a pilot, co-pilot, crew chief and door gunner. The crew chief and door gunner man M-60 machine guns on each side of the helicopter and perform two valuable functions. First, they are in the best position to see and locate enemy fire. Secondly, they mark areas where fire is being received and place suppressive fire on enemy positions until armed helicopter firing runs can be made. Having manned machine guns on the troop carriers materially reduces the vulnerability on these helicopters, particularly going into and out of LZs on assault operations. The crew chief and gunner perform similar functions on the armed helicopters and are extremely important members of the air crew.

The pilot, co-pilot and crew chief are authorized by current TOE. The door gunner has been furnished on a basis of one per helicopter, on a 70 day temporary duty basis, from the 25th Infantry Division. While this was undoubtedly adequate as a stop-gap solution for providing Army aviation units with door gunners, the practice has continued for a period of approximately two years. Every three months, regardless of how the unit is engaged, or where the unit may be physically located, an exchange of door gunners must take place. This results in considerable personnel turbulence and lack of continuity until the new group can be absorbed, oriented and trained in the tactics, techniques and procedures used by the unit.

Because the units in Vietnam are actively engaged in combat operations on an almost continual basis, there is little time available to train the door gunners in the duties they will be required to perform. The weapons training and firing practice they receive in Hawaii is generally excellent, however, the tactical training requirements vary with the units in Vietnam and can only be conducted in the unit. Normally all aircraft that are mission ready on a given day are committed to operational flights. The missions performed vary considerably, as do the formations used on assault operations. Furthermore, it takes a period of a month or more for the gunner to become accustomed to observing objects and personnel on the ground and estimating distances from altitude. Because of the necessity to learn the various techniques on actual missions and not in an intensified training period, it is normally six weeks to two months before the door gunners are fully qualified in the position which leaves only a short period of complete effectiveness before they are scheduled to depart.

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Since the need for door gunners has been recognised and proven, assignment should be on a full tour basis with preliminary training conducted in CONUS. Phasing should be gradual so that the gunners in any unit are replaced over a period of time.

e. Fire Discipline. During this reporting period, the 52d Aviation Battalion has placed a great deal of emphasis on fire discipline. First, there is considerable evidence that the tide is beginning to turn against the VC. Indiscriminate firing of weapons into areas which may be occupied by innocent civilians can only hurt the joint Government of Vietnam - United States effort to win the support of the people. Thus it is frequently necessary to break away from an inhabited area when light sniper fire is received, rather than to return the fire and possibly kill innocent people. Wide dissemination and continued command emphasis on fire discipline has produced effective results within this battalion.

Secondly, with the rapid build-up of US forces in Vietnam and the increased tempo of VC activity in recent months, ammunition expenditure has increased accordingly. As a result, it has become necessary to closely monitor and control the fires from armed helicopters and door gunners. Where it had been the practice previously to allow door gunners free fire on the first lift of an airlanded assault, it is now held to firing only when fired upon. The armed helicopters provide suppressive fires as before, however, if it becomes apparent that there is no enemy resistance or very light resistance, fires are ceased or reduced. Expenditure of ammunition during training is held to an absolute minimum as well, in an effort to conserve ammunition. Even so, a shortage of 2.75" rockets, 40mm grenades and linked 7.62 ammunition exists.

f. Operational Techniques, US vs ARVN. The requirement for slightly different operational techniques when operating with US units as opposed to ARVN units was evidenced during this quarter. The US units supported were both pure infantry units and airborne infantry units. Examples of the difference in operational techniques, the problems associated with them, and some possible solutions are presented below.

(1) Newly Assigned Units. One of the initial problems, is that US ground forces are new in the country. In spite of a high state of training prior to arrival, the training emphasis in most units is oriented toward conventional warfare rather than guerrilla warfare. This necessitates a period of adjustment, training and a gradual phasing into combat operations as they exist in Vietnam. The application of the "theory" of field manuals to actual situations is included in this period.

(2) Aircraft Load Limits. The weight differential, (body weight, as well as equipment weight) is an aspect that has far reaching implications. Where eight or nine ARVN soldiers can be transported in a helicopter, only five or six US soldiers can be transported under identical circumstances. This causes the requirement for either additional helicopters to transport the same number of troops, or a greater number of lifts to place the same number of troops into a landing zone. It is well to note that this reduction in lift capability may reduce the number of troops which can be landed in one lift to below an acceptable figure. Offsetting somewhat this reduction in troop strength transportable in one lift is the increased firepower found in US units as compared with ARVN units ie: more automatic weapons, mortars, and artillery support. This same advantage becomes a disadvantage however, in light of the additional lift capability required to airlift these weapons, their carriers (ie: M-274 Mechanical Mules) and the ammunition to supply them. This is true also with regard to the resupply of rations. A few bags of rice with local procurement of water is normal for ARVN forces, as compared with large quantities of rations and water required by US forces. In addition to rations,

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US units tend to expend more ammunition for both small arms and crewserved weapons, than will their ARVN counterparts. This, of course, compounds the resupply problem.

(3) Communications. The new family of radios in the hands of most units entering the country at this time is far superior to anything found in ARVN units. This provides the commander with positive communications and control of his units in most situations. But this advantage sometimes becomes a disadvantage when, considered in light of the great number of stations operating on relatively few frequencies. This becomes a problem of critical magnitude during periods of intense ground or air action. The tendency of all too many US soldiers when a radio is made available to them is to transmit incessantly. The solution is one of not only enforcing strict radio discipline, but also of reducing the number of stations on a net to the minimum required for positive control.

(4) Planning, Reaction and Execution. Whether operating with US or ARVN units it is essential that aviation personnel be brought into the planning at the earliest possible time. This provides the aviation commander with the opportunity to program his resources and to advise the tactical commander on aviation considerations in the plan thereby reducing changes and wasted motion. In general, planning, reaction, and execution is considerably more rapid for US forces than for ARVN. Initial planning is essentially the same in that it is somewhat centralized in both US and ARVN units. After the initial planning however, there is distinct divergence in methods between the two. Where ARVN units will habitually retain even the most detailed planning and execution at a brigade or higher level, US units, after the early planning, will decentralize both planning and execution. This results in a more rapid and concrete final plan and subsequently, a more rapid and organized execution. This rapid execution is also enhanced by the higher state of training, more positive control, and general familiarity with aviation operations found in US units.

(5) Fire Support Coordination. An area that requires additional emphasis is the coordination and warning of friendly supporting fires. This is not normally a problem with ARVN units, simply because the ARVN forces either do not have, or cannot mass, sufficient artillery in any one location. However, with the great numbers of supporting weapons, both mortar and artillery, found in US units, it can be a critical problem, particularly when operating with a large number of troop carrying helicopters, armed helicopters, and close support Air Force aircraft. Positive measures must be available to disseminate gun positions, trajectories, impact areas, and times of firing. This can best be accomplished by the information being centralized at one location and dissemination being accomplished over all frequencies that aircraft would normally be operating on.

g. Use of Force Trim in UH1 Helicopters. The use of Force Trim is considered to be absolutely necessary for all combat assault operations and low level flights in Vietnam. Use of the Force Trim, in addition to the co-pilot monitoring the controls at low altitude and both pilot and co-pilot having their shoulder harness locked, enables the co-pilot to take control of the aircraft in case the pilot is hit by enemy fire. All aviators recently arrived in this unit from the UH1 transition course at Fort Rucker, Alabama, flew very little or none at all with the Force Trim during their transition course. The school seems to place scant emphasis on the use of the Force Trim. It is recommended that the Aviation School and all units responsible for the conduct of UH1 Transition Training place greater emphasis on the proper use of the Force Trim. Most aviators of this unit prefer to use the Force Trim at all times after becoming accustomed to it.

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h. Base Airfield Support Requirements. With the influx of new units into Vietnam, the housekeeping, administrative and logistical support, and control problems of these new units and of the units already organic, pose new problems that require solution in order to maintain operational efficiency at an optimum level. At present, the 52d Aviation Battalion Headquarters, provides command, control, administrative and logistical support for some 27 organic, tenant and adjacent units. These include such units as military police, signal and maintenance support units, signal communications units, etc. This headquarters is also responsible for security of an area with a 5000 meter perimeter. This is accomplished by an organic security detachment augmented by personnel of assigned and attached units. The aviation battalion has, as its prime mission, the task of providing aviation support to II ARVN Corps and US Field Forces, Vietnam. To accomplish its aviation mission of supporting a Corps Tactical Zone with an area greater than 50,000 square miles, the battalion has major subordinate units located at four separate locations and individual or small groups of aircraft at numerous other locations. When operational missions occur requiring a control headquarters, elements, or the major portion of this headquarters move to and operate from one or more field locations simultaneously. This is in addition to continuing to operate and support the base airfield at Camp Holloway plus subordinate units located at other locations. To insure the continued operational efficiency of aviation units committed to an operation away from its base airfield, the tenant units remaining at the base airfield, and major subordinate units, it is recommended that personnel and equipment be provided to perform the housekeeping, administrative and logistical support of permanent base airfields. These should include air traffic control, engineers, PCL, ordnance, signal, fire fighting, etc. A study of the requirements for Holloway Army Airfield and Ban Me Thout City Airfield has been completed and forwarded to higher headquarters for consideration.

4. (U) Logistics:

The biggest single logistic activity during this quarter was the handling of PCL and ammunition at 22 prestock points in the II Corps area. During the latter part of the period, the influx of US Army aircraft into the II Corps area increased requirements to the point where it was necessary to request that the new units abstain from using battalion prestocks. It was also recommended to higher headquarters that the 52d Aviation Battalion be relieved of the responsibility for maintenance of prestock PCL and ammo at the 22 locations inasmuch as the 52d Aviation Battalion now represents only a small portion of the aviation resources in the II Corps area.

5. (U) Communications:

The rapid expansion of the military installations throughout the Republic of Vietnam during the fourth quarter of FY-65 and the first quarter of FY-66 has caused an urgent need of command emphasis for a study and possible revamping of the entire in-country land lines communication system. The present switching facilities located at Camp Holloway have for the past six months been extended far beyond their intended capabilities. The equipment is literally worn out and third and fourth echelon replacement parts are presently non-available at the supporting signal maintenance repair facility. Subscriber service has decreased rather than increased during the past quarter. A comprehensive coverage relating to the in-country telephone system and other signal matters is detailed in Inclosure #3 of this document.

6. (U) Aviation Safety:

The 52d Aviation Battalion experienced a marked increase in aircraft accidents during the 1st Quarter of FY-66. It is probable that the increase resulted from a combination of several cause factors.

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The conduct of combat operations by the Battalion ~~was~~ greatly increased during the months of August and September. Undoubtedly the explosive accident rate in September was a culmination of continuous operation of aircraft at peak performance and extended flying duty by the aviators under tactical conditions away from home bases. Materiel failure accounted for 50% of the accidents, however, no common factor could be determined. The physiological and psychological effects associated with high flying hours, living in the field, and the daily conduct of combat operations had an over-all eroding effect on safety consciousness of the aviators. As a result, some aviators were more prone to disregard safety precautions and take calculated risks. Additionally, close supervision and command guidance of the young aviators by commanders was made more difficult by the nature of numerous missions which necessitated that the aviators be separated from their units for extended periods.

A new concept in aircraft accident prevention procedures was instituted within the Battalion. Fundamentally the program "SNOWBALL" is designed to create in the mind of each individual (pilot, crewchief, mechanic, POL handler, etc) associated with the operation of aircraft, a safety conscious attitude and the need for extra daily effort to eliminate conditions which contribute to aircraft accidents. By developing a concerted safety conscious attitude, accident free days will "SNOWBALL" into accident free weeks and months.

Robert L. Cody
ROBERT L. CODY
Lt Col, Inf
Commanding

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AVAW-C (12 Oct 65)

1st Ind

SUBJECT: Command Report for Quarterly Period ending 30 September 1965

HEADQUARTERS, 12TH AVIATION GROUP, APO SAN FRANCISCO 96307, 19 October 1965

TO: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, APO US Forces 96307

1. (U) Concur with the recommendations of the Commanding Officer.
52nd Aviation Battalion.

2. (U) Expeditious action should be initiated to expand the communications facilities at Camp Holloway

Raymond G Jones
RAYMOND G JONES
Colonel, Arty
Commanding

Downgraded to UNCLASSIFIED when removed from basic

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GPOP-MH (14 Oct 65)

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal (U)

2nd Ind (U) *exp*

HQ US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 29 OCT 1965

TO: Commanding General, United States Army, Vietnam, APO U.S. Forces 96307

1. Copy No. 1 of Command Report of 52d Aviation Battalion for quarterly period ending 30 September 1965 is returned herewith for forwarding through channels to DCSOPS DA in accordance with paragraph 5b(1), AR 525-24, and preparation of comments, by indorsement, in accordance with paragraph 5c, AR 525-24.

2. Request that every effort be made to return subject Command Report, properly indorsed through channels, to this headquarters NLT 20 November 1965.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

1 Incl
52d Avn Bn
Comd Rept

M. S. Knasiak

M. S. KNASIAK
MAJOR, WAC
ACTING ASST AG

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Prepared UNCLASSIFIED when
Separated From Classified
Indications

2

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AVC (12 Oct 65)

2nd Ind

SUBJECT: Command Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 September 1965 (U)

Headquarters, United States Army, Vietnam, APO San Francisco 96307 16 NOV 1965

TO: Commander-In-Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-MH,
APO US Forces 96558

1. (C) Reference Section II, paragraph 1:

a. The shortages of specified enlisted MOS' have become a matter of command interest. USARV message number 50288, DTG 101120Z Nov 65, lists the critical shortages in USARV aviation units and requests DA to expedite fill action. Officers are substituted for warrant officer aviation positions, command wide. The 52nd Aviation Battalion is slightly overstrength in aviator positions.

b. There have been delays in mail delivery due to the rapid troop build-up. The situation is expected to improve as new facilities are constructed.

c. The extreme short supply of exchange necessity items was not brought to the attention of anyone in a position to effect immediate shipment of such necessities. The unit has been requested to make it's specific requirements known. Special fill of requirements will be made upon receipt of order list.

2. (U) Reference Section II, paragraph 4: Concur that this pre-stock mission would not normally be expected of an aviation battalion. This headquarters is currently working to solve the problem.

3. (C) Reference Section II, paragraph 5: Action is being taken to provide dial telephone service to Camp Holloway from the exchange at Pleiku. The dial automatic exchange at Pleiku is being expanded to provide improved service. Communication service at Camp Holloway should be improved considerably by the end of November.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Henry L. Denny

HENRY L. DENNY
CWO, W3, USA
Asst Adjutant General

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DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 5200.10